

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

PHILLIP MICHAEL PRIDGEN, SR.,

*

Plaintiff,

*

v.

Civil Action No. CCB-18-1323

*

JURGEN LEIJEKKEN, et al.

*

Defendants.

MEMORANDUM

Plaintiff Phillip M. Pridgen, Sr., a resident of Maryland, representing himself, has filed suit against Jurgen Leijekken, “CEO” of HireRight, LLC, Janet Miller, “manager” of HireRight, and Will Wainwright, “escalation specialist” of HireRight. Leijekken and Miller are located in Irvine, California, which appears to be the company headquarters; Wainwright is located in Nashville, Tennessee. They have filed a motion to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction, which has been fully briefed and will be granted.

Pridgen claims that HireRight (the company employing the individual defendants) provided false information about his driving record that resulted in the loss of several job opportunities with freight hauling companies, negatively affected his credit, and caused the failure of his business.¹ Email correspondence between Pridgen and Wainwright, as well as other documents attached to Pridgen’s complaint and “motion to strike”, reflect his ongoing and ultimately successful attempts to correct apparently inaccurate information contained in a background report done by the company. He seeks injunctive relief and \$700,000.00 in damages.

¹ HireRight is not named as a defendant in the complaint. Whether this court would have jurisdiction over the company will not be addressed at this time.

Whatever the merits of Pridgen's dispute with HireRight, he has alleged nothing that would subject the individual defendants to personal jurisdiction in this District. Their status as officers or employees of the company is not sufficient. *Harte-Hanks Direct Marketing/Baltimore, Inc. v. Varilease Tech. Fin. Grp.*, 299 F.Supp 2d. 505, 513-14 (D. Md. 2004). There is minimal or no contact shown with Leijekken or Miller, and the contact with Wainwright consists of emails in which Wainwright appears to be attempting to resolve the dispute for Pridgen. And the defamatory or false statements allegedly were made by HireRight, but not by the individual defendants. There simply is no basis for the court to assert either specific or general personal jurisdiction over these defendants. *See Lewis v. Willough at Naples*, 311 F.Supp. 3d 731, 736-37 (D. Md. 2018).

Accordingly, Pridgen's request to appoint counsel will be denied and the defendants' motion to dismiss will be granted. A separate Order follows.

Date: 8/21/18

CCB
Catherine C. Blake
United States District Judge